

LISTENING POST

LIVE

Irina Mejoueva

By CHIHO IUCHI

Staff Writer

Irina Mejoueva, a Japan-based Russian pianist, always appears on stage with scores — but not because she can't memorize the pieces she performs. "I am a performer. Since I am not a composer, the piece exists only in the score," she remarks with a smile. Mejoueva looks at the score when she plays the piano, every time seeing it with new eyes. It's a custom that seems to realize some kind of interaction or even spiritual contact with the great composers of the past.

After studying at Gnessin State Musical College in Moscow, under pianist Vladimir Tropp, Mejoueva won first prize at the Eduard Flipse Piano Competition in Rotterdam in 1992, which led her to start a career as a pianist. She played in the Netherlands, Germany and France. Since 1997 she has settled in Tokyo.



Irina Mejoueva

"On my first visit to Japan, I felt quite at home, even with a sense of *deja vu*," recounts Mejoueva, who soon became enamored with kabuki, noh theater and other facets of traditional Japanese culture. "It requires years of training to acquire traditional patterns," she says, conveying her admiration for the performers who have passed down artistic secrets for generations with modesty rigorous discipline. "The individuality of the performer reveals itself naturally through a long experience of training oneself with respect to the work. I am just a beginner."

Her upcoming recital, which is her first in Tokyo in four years, features an all-Russian program, focusing on three composers/pianists: Sergei Rachmaninov (1873-1943), Alexandre Scriabine (1872-1915), and their younger contemporary Nikolai Medtner (1880-1951), who were all active in the so-called Silver Age of culture from the last decades of the Russian Empire until the earliest of the Soviet Union.

Among the highlights is Medtner's Sonata No. 7, "The Night Wind," a complex and grand piece that requires high technical and musical abilities. Mejoueva is one of a few performers of Medtner's music, which is seldom performed in Japan. Her performance integrates its polyphonic complexity written in solid sonata form. She touches the piano thoughtfully, varying from grave chords to airy passages, all the while keeping faithful to the spirit of reproduction. This leads to a re-creation of the work constructed much like a beautiful piece of architecture.

Irina Mejoueva performs at Hakuju Hall in Tokyo, on Oct. 2 at 7 p.m. Tickets cost ¥4,500. For more information, call (03) 3235-3777.

Other Music this week



Nomiya shelves Barbie image

By FELICITY HUGHES

The Japan Times: Friday, Sept. 18, 2009
(C) All rights reserved

[Go back to The Japan Times Online](#)



LISTENING POST

Pastels / Tenniscoats "Two Sunsets"

By SHAWN DESPRES

[Close window](#)